Approved For Release 2010/01/11 : CIA-RDP88-01070R000301640006-0

RADIO TV REPORTS, INC.

4701 WILLARD AVENUE, CHEVY CHASE, MARYLAND 20815 (301) 656-4068

FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS STAFF

PROGRAM Morning Edition STATION WAMU-FM NPR Network

DATE March 27, 1985 6:45 A.M. CITY Washington, D.C.

SUBJECT Death of Major Nicholson

BOB EDWARDS: The official Soviet news agency Tass said today that U.S. Army Major Arthur Nicholson was in a restricted area, taking pictures of military equipment through a window, when he was shot and killed by a Soviet sentry in East Germany on Sunday. Nicholson was part of a 14-member U.S. military liaison team based in East Germany since 1947.

James Bamford is an expert on American intelligence gathering and author of the book The Puzzle Palace, about the National Security Agency. He says the liaison team's mission is to observe Soviet military activities.

JAMES BAMFORD: I think they're able to get quite a bit of information on troop strength and tactical type of equipment, such as tanks and armored personnel carriers, that type of information. I don't think they're very useful in terms of getting high-level strategic information. I think their main job is collecting the battlefield type of information that they can get close-up.

EDWARDS: American sources quoted in the New York Times say that Major Nicholson was observing Soviet tank sheds. Now, what could one hope to learn from that?

BAMFORD: Well, I think he would hope to see a tank inside the shed.

One of the problems that the United States has in terms of spying on East Germany is the fact that our satellites are only capable of observing a certain amount of the area for a very small segment of the day. Usually only about a few minutes out of the day is a spy satellite able to photograph the area. And

Material supplied by Radio TV Reports, Inc. may be used for file and reference purposes only. It may not be reproduced or exhibited.

Approved For Release 2010/01/11 : CIA-RDP88-01070R000301640006-0

Approved For Release 2010/01/11 : CIA-RDP88-01070R000301640006-0

then again, there's a problem of cloud cover.

So, a lot of times, if the Soviet Union or East Germany knows when a satellite is going to go over, they'll hide the equipment under a cover or in a shed. And perhaps this is one way to get around the problem of not observing the tanks close-up by a satellite. And perhaps they were going to take some close-up photos of the cannon on the tank or a particular armament on the tank.

EDWARDS: Any idea how successful this intelligence gathering has been over the years?

BAMFORD: I assume that it's been quite successful. The United States gathers quite a bit of intelligence through the human sources, and this is probably the most ambitious of all the human intelligence operations performed by the Army, primarily because the Russians do the same thing in West Germany.

EDWARDS: Do you know of any other place in the world where two adversaries have such an arrangement?

BAMFORD: No. As I said, from all I know, this is the only place in the world that has it this obvious, that it's this overt.

Again, the attaches perform a somewhat similar function. Military attaches in the Soviet Union, for example, are, in a sense, legalized spies. That's their primary mission, is collecting intelligence. And the same with Soviet attaches in the United States. And every now and then, an attache is caught spying and is declared persona non grata and thrown out of a country. But it never comes to this violent a conclusion.

EDWARDS: National security expert James Bamford.

Approved For Release 2010/01/11 : CIA-RDP88-01070R000301640006-0